

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Footwear with a lace fastening comprising: an opening ~~(5)~~ with a first edge ~~(5a)~~ and a second edge ~~(5b)~~ which are juxtaposed and each of which ~~the first and second edges~~ carries a respective plurality of lacing eyes, and at least two laces ~~(20, 21)~~ extending through respective pairs of the lacing eyes ~~(11a, b-17a, b)~~, characterized in that and the ends of both of the laces converge on both of the edges of the opening, with at least one end of each lace ~~(20, 21)~~ extending through a respective end lacing eye ~~(17a, b)~~ of the fastening provided on each of the ~~opposite~~ first and second edges.

2. (Currently Amended) The Ffootwear according to Claim 1 in which the corresponding ends of each lace ~~(20, 21)~~ converge in respective and separate grips ~~(23)~~.

3. (Currently Amended) The Ffootwear according to Claim 1 ~~or Claim 2~~ in which the laces are led through alternating lacing eyes of the respective pluralities of lacing eyes in a manner such that, between two lacing eyes ~~(11a-13a; 13a-15a; 15a-17a)~~ of the same edge through which a first of the laces extends, there is at least one lacing eye ~~(12a, 14a, 16a)~~ of the same edge through which a second of the laces extends.

4. (Currently Amended) The Ffootwear according to Claim 1 ~~one or more of the preceding claims~~ in which the lacing eyes are of the closed-eye type.

5. (Currently Amended) The Ffootwear according to Claim 1 ~~one or more of the preceding claims~~ in which means ~~(22a, 22b)~~ are provided for locking the laces and are active independently on each pair of the respective ends of laces converging in the same grip.

6. (Currently Amended) The Ffootwear according to Claim 5 in which the locking means are of the constricting type.

7. (Currently Amended) The Ffootwear according to Claim 5 ~~or Claim 6~~ in which the locking means are provided in the region of the respective end lacing eyes.

8. (New) The footwear according to Claim 2 in which the laces are led through alternating lacing eyes of the respective pluralities of lacing eyes in a manner such that, between two lacing eyes of the same edge through which a first of the laces extends, there is at least one lacing eye of the same edge through which a second of the laces extends.

9. (New) The footwear according to Claim 2 in which the lacing eyes are of the closed-eye type.

10. (New) The footwear according to Claim 3 in which the lacing eyes are of the closed-eye type.

11. (New) The footwear according to Claim 2 in which means are provided for locking the laces and are active independently on each pair of the respective ends of laces converging in the same grip.

12. (New) The footwear according to Claim 3 in which means are provided for locking the laces and are active independently on each pair of the respective ends of laces converging in the same grip.

13. (New) The footwear according to Claim 4 in which means are provided for locking the laces and are active independently on each pair of the respective ends of laces converging in the same grip.

14. (New) The footwear according to Claim 6 in which the locking means are provided in the region of the respective end lacing eyes.